

The Bryde Study: Achievement, educational adjustment, and alienation among the Teton Sioux*

1. Introduction and specific aims

Low achievement and evidence of serious maladaptive behavior are characteristic of many North American tribal groups. Such signs of deviation from the mainstream of American life are particularly clearly seen among the Teton Dakota Sioux. Failure to achieve an adequate education, demonstrated by extremely high drop-out rates, initially low and decreasing intellectual performance with increasing grade level, alcoholism, crime and delinquency are common observations (Artichoker, 1958; Coombs, Kron, Collister and Anderson, 1958; U.S. Department of Agriculture, 1963; Hoyt, 1962; Fey and McNickle, 1959; Havighurst, 1957; Havighurst and Newgarton, 1955; MacGregor, 1946; Simpson and Unger, 1957; Spilka and Bryde, 1964; Thompson, 1963).

The intended research proposes to determine:

- a. the extent to which educational failure and signs of reducing achievement with increasing age and grade level are a function of a growing alienation from the cultural norms of the dominant culture;
- b. the degree of relationship between traditional childrearing practices and the development of this alienation.

2. Rationale

A. In general

The psychosocial concept of alienation is related to Durkheim's theory of anomie. The latter refers to a state of cultural disorganization and deregulation in which the individual is unable to refer his behavior and that of his fellows to any stable set of standards. A state of normlessness is thus said to exist (Durkheim, 1960; Nettler, 1957; Yinger, 1964). The individual in such a state is said to respond by developing the psychological state of alienation. Durkheim stressed the fact that an individual would feel afloat in a normless situation, while Marx emphasized the development of self-estrangement, the failure to develop a real sense of personal identity in such circumstances (Marx, 1960). Dean (1961) focussed on three aspects of the concept: powerlessness, or feeling of helplessness and futility; normlessness, or a lack of rules and standards to define right and wrong and social isolation, an asocial detachment

This paper, edited by J. Couture, presents exclusively the rationale, hypotheses and findings of Rev. J. Bryde S.J., Ph. d (Denver), Holy Rosary School, Pine Ridge, S. Dakota.

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from others. Seeman (1959) drawing on Rotter (1954) and Fromm (1955), included "meaninglessness" and "self-estrangement" in his definition of alienation. Using a social learning approach, Seeman defined meaninglessness in terms of a low expectancy that one could predict the future, while self-estrangement is defined as referring to the idea that one does not control himself, but somehow finds his behavior directed toward alien ends. An operational approach was used by Elmore (1964). Using factor-analytic methodology in his study of psychological anomie, he isolated some five factors. In addition to those determined by Dean and Seeman, Elmore found the item-complexes of valuelessness, hopelessness, and close-mindedness. The central feature of valuelessness is perceived value-contradiction in the environment and a feeling that what authority says is basically untrustworthy. Hopelessness, like elements in normlessness and meaninglessness, seems to stress a lack of order but focusses this in perceptions of a dismal, purposeless future. Close-mindedness might represent one pattern of "last efforts" to escape the alienated state by narrowing one's field of vision, and responding with a vague diffuse hostility and rigid conformity to what few and/or artificial values may exist.

It is hypothesized that the Sioux culture and society which once provided norms for its members is currently anomic for all practical purposes, and as a result the majority of the Sioux are tending to reveal response patterns indicative of alienation and its components. In other words, it would seem reasonable to view the Sioux as actually caught between two cultures, and as literally being outside of, and between, both. It is thus hypothesized that the individual Sioux is a truly alienated person and that this psychological state is both a product of and a contributor to his continuing failure to better his circumstances and situation. This psychological state is suggested as the general psychosocial condition out of which develop the high rates for crime, delinquency, alcoholism, mental disturbance, truancy, school dropouts, and low and reducing educational achievement found among Indians (Hoyt, 1962).

The Indian child exposed to a traditional American education has a likelihood of identifying with the achievement oriented values of the dominant culture, but in a majority of cases fails to do so. It is believed that the prime reason for such lack of adaptation among the young is the nature of the child-rearing practices employed by the Sioux parents. The extremely indulgent under-protective pattern of child-rearing utilized is completely contrary to that approved by white parents. The child is given every opportunity to develop independence by being permitted to explore the world without the interference of parents. The role of elders is simply to cater to the child in every way possible. Discipline in terms of parental authority is totally absent, and it is felt that the child will acquire all necessary knowledge through his experiences with his environment. Of utmost importance in social life is the desire that the child learn to be able to trust and be affectionate towards his elders, thus every effort is made to place adults in a supportive and warm relationship to children. The few controls exercised, which may or may not be adopted by the children, are based on warning and shame, rather than authoritarian direction and guilt training, which is so representative of white culture (Erikson, 1963; Hasserick, 1964; MacGregor, 1946). As has been demonstrated, members of "shame" cultures reveal "weaker consciences", in white-American terms, than do those who are products of "guilt" cultures (Benedict, 1946; Grinder and McMichael, 1963; Mead, 1961). The Sioux are a typically "shame" culture (Erikson, 1963; Mead, 1961).

The schools which the Sioux Indian children attend are very much purveyors of the traditional American culture. Their personnel, school administration, facilities, textbooks, etc. all represent and advocate the adoption of American middle class values (Wax, et al. 1964). Not that these values, in themselves, are to be regarded as undesirable, but they are, in matter of fact, opposed to those to which most Indian children have been exposed in their pre-school years. Stressing achievement and success in an authoritarian-oriented atmosphere of work and social relationships, the Indian child no longer finds emphasis on affection and indulgence to which he has become accustomed.

The cooperative mode of existence with its focus on generosity and its antagonism toward status-seeking for which the child has been rewarded and which he has also seen exemplified by his parents, is now countered by a system which values competition. The acquisition of signs which order the children along a continuum of success and failure and that also provide new labels and differential treatment which tend to order children along a dimension of better to worse is clearly alien and unacceptable to both the Indian children and their parents (Erikson, 1963; MacGregor, 1946; Wax, 1964). Failure is interpreted in terms of ridicule and shame, hence withdrawal from and aversion to such standard classroom practices as public recitation, testing, etc. There can be no doubt that the white, middle-class values of the school are often in direct conflict with those of the Dakota culture. That serious conflict would result from such a confrontation is to be expected. The response pattern which would result from such a confrontation is here seen as one of alienation.

In their own home settings, Sioux children could never perceive their situation as one of isolation, helplessness, meaninglessness, of any of the other components of the alienation complex, or any of the other components of the alienation complex. Norms toward cooperation, affection and generosity were always exemplified by parents. Elders were everywhere present to pet, pamper, and indulge the children. They could rely on relatives and other adults for support and help for any and every small hurt that might occur. Feelings of belongingness, security, and safety were thus immediately present.

Entrance into the school setting which often involves boarding away from home, rather sharply splits the child off from the pattern of warm and supportive relationships to which he had been previously exposed. Substituted now are elements which are both alien to his way of life and which further serve to alienate him. He sees his situation as one of powerlessness, for he is directly and authoritatively controlled by adults who, if affectionate, are often unable to convey such an impression to him. One factor contributing to this feeling might be the fact that one of the external shame and fear-inducing elements employed by Sioux mothers is the "bogey-man" who is presented as the white man who can come and take the child away if he moves too far out of line (Bryde, 1964; MacGregor, 1946). Teachers attempt to institute self-control in the children by methods of discipline which have meaning in the white "guilt" culture, but these often are meaningless to the Dakota child. In addition, competition does not represent a norm for these children but an isolating, normless and meaningless kind of relationship. The ability to predict reinforcements for one's behavior as previously learned becomes poor in these changed circumstances adding further to a feeling of vagueness and loss of meaning. Briefly, as Seeman (1959) has shown, a new set of social learning experiences occurs which foster the development of an alienated outlook.

B. Supportive data

Of the many educational problems encountered among the Sioux are dropout rates of sixty per cent (Thompson, 1963) as opposed to a national average of approximately 23 per cent (U.S. Department of Agriculture, 1963). In addition, the achievement levels of Sioux children and adolescents tend to remain consistently below the levels of their white counterparts (Artichoker, 1963; Coombs et al., 1958). Of greater significance is the fact noted by Havighurst (1957) that "Indian children compare more favorably with white children in elementary grades than in high-school" (p.114). Achievement and grade level appear to be negatively correlated especially during the junior and senior high-school years (Bryde, 1964; Coombs et al., 1958). Despite the fact that dropouts during this period are likely to remove the poorest students, fairly regular drops in achievement are still manifested. Similar findings have been reported on the achievement of Negroes in New York (Deater, 1964) and for the intelligence of children coming from deprived environments (Ludeman, 1930; Sherman and Key, 1932; Thorndike, 1940). The achievement drops noted in this research are, however, not accompanied by similar reductions in I.Q. over the same period. The fact that the observed achievement drops were not paralleled by similar variations in intelligence plus evidence that the achievement scores of white children in the same area tend to increase steadily (Coombs, 1953) suggest that the deprived-environment hypothesis may be only a partial explanation of these observations. Support, however, is gained for theorizing that a psychosocial developmental process is also occurring which is detrimental to educational performance. The purpose of the present study is thus to develop and assess a theoretical framework relative to this problem (cf. supra, pp.1-3).

Some data have already been provided to assess the possible importance of alienation relative to the behavior of Indian children. Kerckhoff (1959) utilized this concept of alienation in his study of Chippewa school children and found it to be negatively related to measures of achievement motivation as had been predicted. The present investigation represents an effort to extend Kerckhoff's effort by examining how actual measures of achievement relate to alienation among Oglala Sioux adolescents. The following hypotheses were tested.

3. Hypotheses

- a. Alienation and its components, powerlessness, normlessness, and social isolation will be negatively related to achievement.
- b. Since alienation is theoretically related to generalized expressions of hostility, one such manifestation, prejudice, will be positively related to alienation and its components, and negatively associated with achievement.
- c. As one becomes more alienated his needs to conform and seek social approval will reduce, hence achievement will be positively associated with the need for social approval while the latter will be negatively associated with prejudice and alienation.

4. Method

Subjects: One hundred and five Oglala school children in the 9th through 12th grades in a Catholic mission school on the Pine Ridge reservation, South Dakota,

served as subjects. There were 55 boys and 50 girls in the sample.

Tests and Materials: Alienation and its aspects, powerlessness, normlessness and social isolation were assessed by the Dean Alienation scale (Dean, 1960; 1961).

The prejudicial expressions of the students were measured by the Struening P-scale (Struening, 1963). This 16 item factor-pure scale is controlled for acquiescent response set and correlates non-significantly with measures of social desirability (Spilka and Reynolds, 1965). Each item is weighted in accordance with the magnitude of its loading on a factor of prejudice (Struening, 1963).

Social approval was measured by the Marlowe-Crowne scale (Crowne and Marlowe, 1960). Though originally interpreted as measuring the tendency to give socially desirable answers on personality inventories, this instrument has been successfully employed as an indicator of needs for social approval (Marlowe, 1962).

Intellectual ability was assessed primarily by the Kuhlmann-Finch scale (Finch, 1958). The achievement examination employed for all grade levels was the Iowa Test of Educational Development (Lindquist, 1958).

5. Results and discussion

The basic data for the alienation, prejudice, and social approval variables by grades reveals some interesting trends.

a. Powerlessness, normlessness, and alienation scores increase steadily from the 9th to the 11th grades and then reduce; social isolation scores continue this trend through the 12th grade. This latter variable is the only one, however, which yields significance beyond the .05 level when assessed by means of a randomized groups analysis of variance design. This suggests that feelings of social isolation apparently increases to the extent that students remain in school. Since the majority of those who enter school do not finish, those who appear to make the adjustment, may not find themselves socially compatible with their fellows. (Can it be concluded that this is alienation? or choice? n.d.l.r.).

b. The only other variable on which significance was obtained was that of prejudice. This appears wholly due to a very large drop in the prejudicial attitudes of those who attain 12th grade. This might either result from the more prejudiced students dropping out of school, or internalization of the teachings fostered by instructors. In all likelihood both factors are operating.

c. In order to assess the hypotheses, correlational procedures were employed. Pearson-product moment coefficients were computed among all variables.

A tendency exists for the correlations obtained between the achievement, alienation, and alienation-component variables to increase fairly consistently as grade level increases. An erratic and less evident pattern of significance characterizes the relationships with the Prejudice and Marlowe-Crowne scale scores. All coefficients are in the expected direction, and of the 42 obtained, 22 are significant at or beyond the .05 level, suggesting fairly

extensive support for the theoretical orientation espoused here.

These coefficients, however, include the influence of intelligence on achievement and an impure estimate of the relationship between achievement and the non-intellectual variables is thus obtained. In order to evaluate the hypotheses more directly, both part and partial coefficients were computed between the achievement and the non-intellectual measures. In the latter case, the effects of mean I.Q. are partialled out of both sets of variables; in the former instance, I.Q. is removed only from the achievement measure. Part correlation coefficients are computed because I.Q. correlates significantly with certain of the psychosocial variables but not with others.

The removal of I.Q. from the hypothesized relationships did not strengthen the degree of association observed. Generally, the pattern of correlations and their direction remains the same. Alienation and its components tend to be negatively and significantly related to achievement scores on the Iowa Tests of Educational Achievement, and these relationships appear to increase with grade level, reaching their maximum in the 12th grade. Especially strong in these data are the associations of feelings of powerlessness and social isolation with lowered achievement. To the extent that one fails to perform educationally, he may perceive himself as defeated and inadequate. Whether the low and reducing achievement creates this alienative pattern, or the latter results in a drop in achievement motivation cannot be determined. A mutually supportive and circular pattern of such influences may be reasonably theorized. Hypothesis one thus obtains support.

No comparable trends in the correlations between achievement and either Prejudice or the need for social approval are evident. Even though powerlessness is positively and significantly associated with Prejudice, the association is low in magnitude. None of the other Alienation measures or Alienation in toto are significantly associated with the Prejudice scores. The Marlowe-Crowne scale scores also fail to relate to any significant extent with the Alienation measures. Examination of the uncorrected correlation coefficients reveals that both the Struening and Marlowe-Crowne scales do correlate significantly with a number of the achievement scores; however, these relationships disappear totally for the Marlowe-Crowne scale and appear only for the 7th and 9th grade achievement scores among the part and partial coefficients. Hypotheses two and three therefore gain very tentative support at best.

6. Conclusion

These findings clearly suggest that the concept of alienation may be quite fruitful for understanding the educational problems of individuals in many settings. Middleton (1963), for example, has found noteworthy negative relationships between this concept and alienation, which however is complex in structure, both theoretically and statistically, and obviously merits much further research before definitive conclusions relative to this social problem can be affirmed.

7. New approach to Indian education

a. Further research

Dr. Bryde's alienation-achievement study first focussed on 105 students. Other students however were included in his research program. A total of 415 Indian students and 223 White students from the eighth, ninth and twelfth grade levels were studied. The achievement and personality measures were examined for the Indian and White group and among three different Indian grade groupings. Personality comparisons were also made among six different White and Indian subgroups and among five Indian subgroups in order to effect as broad an appreciation of potential group differences as possible.

Investigation of school achievement records of the 164 Indian eighth graders revealed excellent performance on the California Achievement tests from the fourth grade to the sixth grade (cf. Appendix A), during which time the performance of these children excelled national norms. At the seventh grade level the Indian students suddenly "crossed-over" and fell two months behind the norms, and at the eighth grade level were lagging five months. It was hypothesized that psychological conflict during the period of adolescence causes personality problems which block educational achievement and that a comparison of the Indian students with White students would reveal significant differences which reflect such personal turmoil. All subjects were thus given the Minnesota Multiphasic Personality Inventory and comparisons were made among the above-mentioned groups.

In analyzing achievement it was found that the Indian group fell sharply behind the White group at the eighth grade level. No significant differences in achievement were found between Indian boys and Indian girls. No significant differences were found among the blood groups. Similarly, no significant differences were observed between Indian dropouts and those who remained in school.

In comparing the personality variables among the White-Indian groups, the total Indian group, when related to the total White group, revealed 26 significant differences out of a total of 28 personality variables. On each of these measures, the total Indian group revealed greater personality disruption and poorer adjustment. The Indian boys revealed themselves as feeling significantly more rejected, depressed, dependent, alienated from themselves and others, withdrawn and paranoid. The Indian girls showed themselves to be more depressed, alienated from themselves and others, withdrawn and with less need for affection, and rejected, paranoid and anxious. Both groups, particularly those of the eighth grade revealed themselves as feeling caught and carried along by circumstances beyond their control, alienated from themselves and others. Comparisons between the Indian twelfth graders and all White students revealed fewer significant differences than in any of the other Indian-White matchings. Of the 28 comparisons, only 7 were significant. As possible residues of cultural conflict, they were significantly different from all White students in anxiety, psychastenia and tendency to withdraw socially. The eighth grade Indian students in comparison to the twelfth grade showed themselves significantly different in feelings of powerlessness and external influence, rejection, depression and alienation.

Of the 33 comparisons made between Indian dropouts and Indians who remained in school, 7 were significant, all in favor of the continuing students. 18 comparisons were significant when dropouts were compared with twelfth graders.

The centrality of the concept of alienation revealed itself in all the groups studied and was most strongly delineated among Indian dropouts, which strongly suggests the use of this concept as the integrating pattern explaining the behavior of the Indian students studied.

b. New directions

The findings of this study point clearly to a new approach to Indian education. Having identified the central pattern - alienation and anomie, with the resultant feelings of rejection, depression and anxiety - it was seen that the Indian youth is alienated from himself and others. He is not effectively identified with his Indian heritage, nor can he identify with the hostile, White world facing him. His self-image is negative and crippling. He has no direction to his life and is lost.

Since it is impossible to give each Indian youth the therapy necessary to overcome his emotional problems caused by cultural conflict, there arises the necessity of dealing with the groups and classes (within their various schools) and applying the techniques similar to those of group therapy in developing a mental health course designed to lead the Indian youth out of his anomic condition and to teach him how to achieve emotional stability in the cross-cultural stresses he is suffering. The course would teach him how to adjust and could be called acculturational psychology or modern Indian psychology or some similar title.

The research findings seem to suggest that the course should be developed along the following general outline.

1. The Indian youth studied show that they are socially alienated even from their own group. This reveals that they have no effective awareness of their historical racial identity. Since awareness of historical origins is necessary for orientation to any kind of future action, the first part of this course should consist in teaching him a solid, clear history of his race, designed to give him pride in his racial origin. The Indian youth should be taught thoroughly and vividly the history of his Indian race as the first source and basis for personal identity.

2. The next part of the course would teach the Indian youth what values are and how they historically arise - usually from the economy from which a race makes a living. Having gained a mastery of the concept of values as sources of common responses in a culture, the Sioux youth would proceed to a study of the traditional Sioux values. He would be shown why he acts as he does as a Sioux; his subconscious cultural drives would be brought to light and to conscious awareness for understanding and evaluation. Then, having seen what the Sioux values are, he would proceed to a study of the major White-American values. He would be shown how certain major American values clash with his Sioux values and bring about personality tensions and deviations (cf. Appendix 3). He would be taught basic psychological principles of how to adjust to and relieve stress and conflict. He will be shown clearly that acculturational psychology is not a matter of ceasing to be Indian. This is psychologically absurd. He is likewise shown that acculturation is not a matter of completely becoming white. This is also psychologically impossible. He will be shown how to take the best from the two cultures, blend and integrate these values within himself, with the result that he creates within himself a unique, pre-

cious, third kind of personality, which is his enriching contribution to Society. His personality would escape the stereotype of both races and enrich society with a qualitatively different personality. He would have the satisfaction of achieving a unique, modern Indian identity and full self-actualization.

Ideally, such a course should begin on the pre-nursery level and be taught in expanding fashion, at each grade level to senior high school. Let the pre-schoolers have their picture books of Mother Goose and the like, but let them also have their picture and reading books of great people and great legends of their own tribes. Pre-school youngsters can be taught a sense of pride in being Indians without their even being aware of it. They will have pride in their race as an operative value, which will protect them against the adolescent crisis of identification that the current Indian youth is meeting.

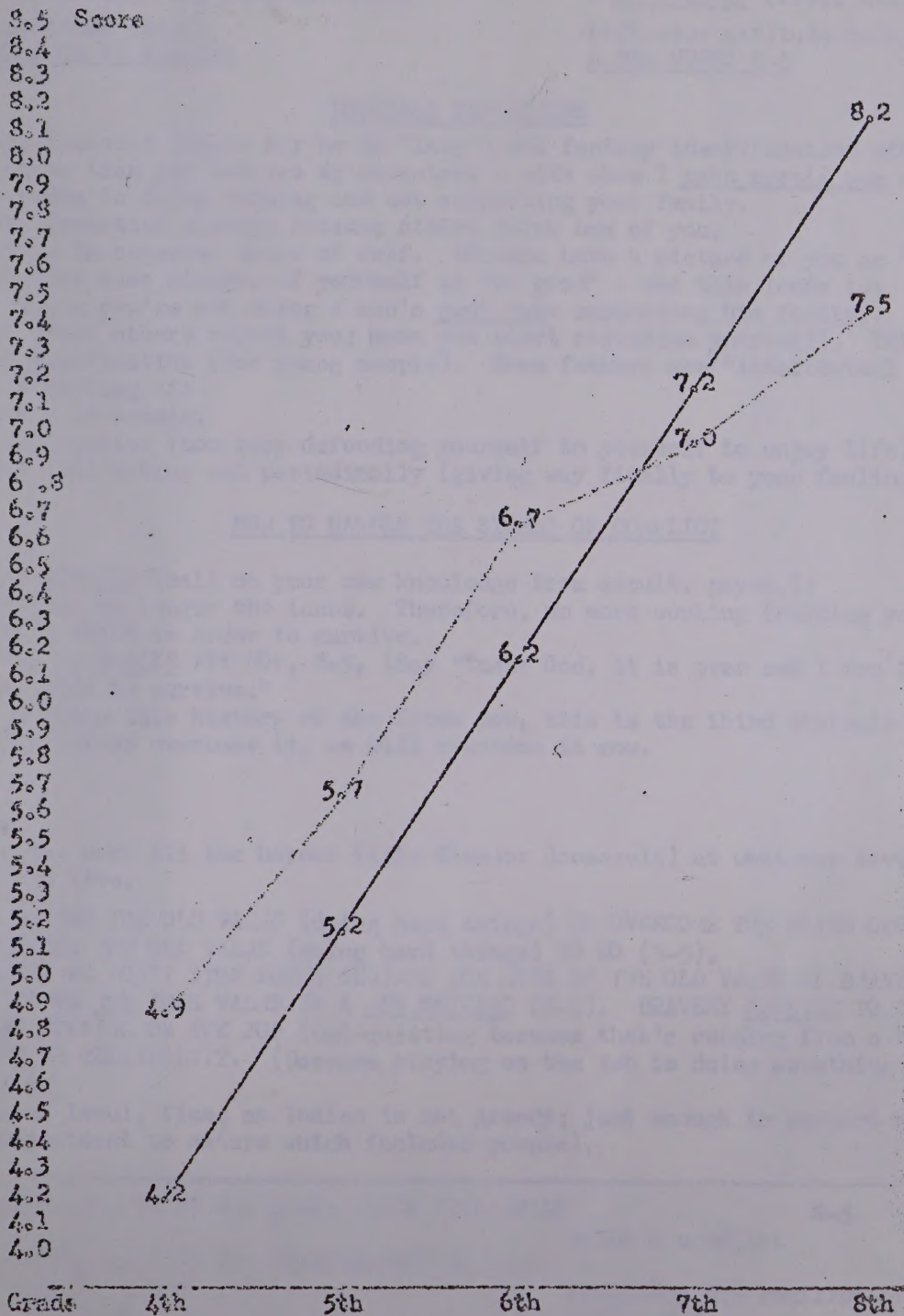
This basic course outline could be applied to any Indian youths of any tribe. Within Indian groups, the only differences in the course would be in the sections on tribal history and tribal values.

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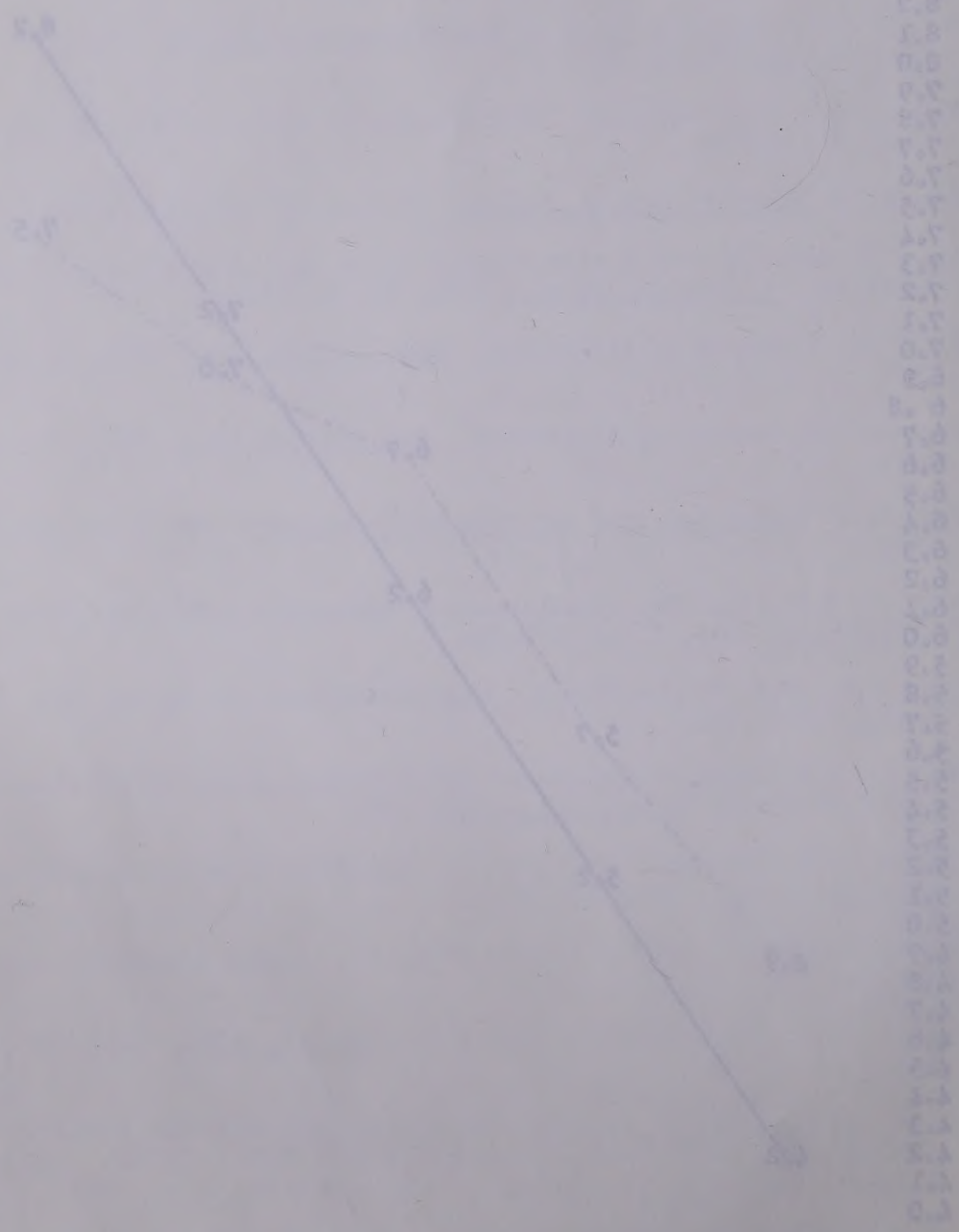
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Appendix A



CAT TEST SCORES OF INDIAN EIGHT GRADE STUDENTS (SOUTH DAKOTA SIOUX).

1000 900 800 700 600 500 400 300 200 100 0



1000
900
800
700
600
500
400
300
200
100
0

OLD TIME SIOUX

BRAVERY (doing the hard thing)
 DOING THE HARDEST THING (risking life)
 ONCE IN A WHILE (then enjoying survival)

Left-over attitude today:
A MAN WORKS ONCE IN A WHILE

WHITE CULTURE

ACHIEVEMENT AND MONEY
 SUCCESS BY WORKING ALL THE TIME (around
 - OR 8 to 5. (Prot. ethic). the clock)

Left-over attitude today:
A MAN WORKS 8-5

POSSIBLE DEVIATIONS

- Withdrawal (because others say he is "lazy") and fantasy identification with past (saying: "I'm better than you because my ancestors -- with whom I make myself one -- were supreme men). Leads to doing nothing and not supporting your family.
- Depression (constant sadness because others think bad of you).
- Introjection to negative image of self. (Others have a picture of you as "no good" and you take on this same picture of yourself as "no good" -- and this leads to:
- Guilt (knowing you're not doing a man's real job: supporting his family).
- Rejection (feel others reject you; soon you start rejection yourself). This alienation.
- No role identification (for young people). Some fathers are "intellectual models." This leads to feeling of:
- Being lost -- or anomie.
- Defense Orientation (too busy defending yourself to yourself to enjoy life).
- Frustration and acting out periodically (giving way finally to your feelings of the moment).

HOW TO HANDLE THE STRESS OF CONFLICT

RECOGNIZE OR REALIZE (call on your new knowledge from accult. psych.):

1. SURVIVAL is no longer the issue. Therefore, no more working (risking your life) ONCE IN A WHILE in order to survive.
2. There is an EASIER WAY NOW, 8-5, (Say "Thank God, it is over and I don't have to risk my life to survive.")
3. THAT: knowing this history of the Sioux now, this is the third obstacle (8-5) and since we always overcame it, we will overcome it now.

4. Therefore: work all the harder (like Eleanor Roosevelt) at whatever level you want your family to live.

THEREFORE: WE USE THE OLD VALUE (doing hard things) TO OVERCOME THE THIRD OBSTACLE (8-5).

IN BRIEF: WE USE THE OLD VALUE (doing hard things) TO DO (8-5).

IN CONCLUSION: WE DON'T STOP BEING INDIANS NOR GIVE UP THE OLD VALUE OF BRAVERY (doing hard things) BUT WE USE THIS VALUE IN A NEW SETTING (8-5). BRAVERY APPLIED TO THE NEW SETTING IS CALLED: STAYING ON THE JOB (not quitting because that's running from a hard thing) OR STEADINESS OR RELIABILITY. (Because staying on the job is doing something hard -- and this is bravery).

(If at a lower level, fine; an Indian is not greedy; just enough to support his family and enjoy his adjustment to nature which includes people).

BRAVERY: taken as WHEN IT WAS DONE: ONCE IN A WHILE

8-5

Makes a conflict

BRAVERY: taken as WHAT IT IS: DOING SOMETHING HARD

Overcomes the conflict or the hard thing: 8-5.

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